

Connecticut General Assembly  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education  
Public Hearing  
March 3, 2015

Thank you, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Patricia Wyskiewicz and I am from New Britain, CT.

Before I get into why I feel a magnet school education is such a wonderful opportunity for today's students, I want you to take a moment and think back about your childhood and those who influenced you. Was it a parent, or a teacher, or maybe a member of the community? What or who influenced you to take the path of public office, to follow your dreams of public service?

I look at my son Tristan, a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at the Medical Profession and Teacher Preparation Academy and I wonder who has helped lead him to have such a passion to want to attend this school; to have such a passion for science and medicine. Is it the fact that he loves to watch shows about science and medicine? Is it the loss of his both his grandfathers to cancer and leukemia that makes him want to find cures for diseases? Is it the health presentations that he did at his former school? I'm not exactly sure what the answer is, but I do know that the move from his past school to MPTPA is the best choice that my husband and I could have ever made for him. Tristan is excited about his school, excited about what he is learning and excited for what is still yet to come. This is the greatest gift a school can give to a parent....seeing the passion in their child to want to learn and succeed!

The magnet schools give those who have a passion, a directed path in academics, and the opportunity to thrive at a much younger age. If you ask most high school students in the public school system, what they are going to major in at the college level, a large majority have no idea. About 80% of college students end up changing their major at least once, according to the National Center on Education Statistics. Most high school students embark on the college search by first choosing a college they love, and then a major, and finally choosing a career path. However, when a student's personality corresponds to their academic path, the results can be profound. Students should hone in on career paths that satisfy their individual interests and needs. This is what our magnet schools do for our children. They let the students individual needs and interests be met.

I ask you to now think again about my opening question. Were your academic needs met as a child? How many changes have you made in your career path? Would you have chosen your path differently if your educational opportunities would have been different?

As Malcolm X said, "Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today."

Our magnet school students are preparing for their future today. They are following their dreams and interests. They are reaching for the stars and are on a journey to success.

I ask that you please take the time to consider all that is presented to you this evening. To help fund and support our magnet schools. To make sure every child has a chance reach their dreams.

Thank you for your time.

Patricia Wyskiewicz  
New Britain, CT